ABNETT LANNING

THE THANOS IMPERATIVE™

SEPULVEDA RAMOS

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THE THANOS IMPERATIVE

OUR UNIVERSE HAS BEEN DAMAGED. A SERIES OF FEROCIOUS INTERSTELLAR WARS HAVE WEAKENED THE FABRIC OF SPACE AND TIME. AND IT HAS BEGUN TO TEAR.

THE EARTHMAN ***RICHARD RIDER*** IS THE LAST ***NOVA***, AN EMPOWERED FORCE OF CHAMPIONS WHO ONCE PROTECTED THE GALAXY. HE HAS DISCOVERED THAT THE LARGEST TEAR, A VAST REGION KNOWN AS THE FAULT, IS THE GATEWAY TO ANOTHER UNIVERSE, A HIDEOUS REFLECTION OF OUR OWN NICKNAMED THE CANCERVERSE.

THIS KNOWLEDGE HAS COME TOO LATE. THE NIGHTMARISH FORCES OF THE CANCERVERSE ARE ALREADY BREACHING THE FAULT. LED BY THEIR UNDYING COMMANDER, ***LORD MAR-VELL***, THEY THREATEN TO OVERWHELM THE ALLIED FORCES OF OUR GALAXY, AND USHER IN THE MALEVOLENT MANY ANGLED GODS OF THE CANCERVERSE.

NOVA AND MANY OTHER HEROIC DEFENDERS MAY ALREADY HAVE PERISHED IN THE INITIAL ASSAULT.

PETER QUILL, A.K.A. ***STAR-LORD***, IS THE LEADER OF THE MISFIT GROUP THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY. HE KNOWS THAT THE CANCERVERSE IS A PLACE WERE DEATH IS EXTINCT AND LIFE HAS TRIUMPHED. HE BELIEVES THERE IS ONLY ONE THING THAT CAN PREVENT THE CANCERVERSE FROM ACHIEVING A TOTAL AND ETERNAL VICTORY...

...***THANOS***, THE MAD TITAN, AVATAR OF DEATH, WHO HAS RECENTLY RETURNED TO LIFE.

BUT THANOS, IF THE PAST IS ANYTHING TO GO BY, MAY BE THE MOST DANGEROUS THING OF ALL.

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THE THANOS IMPERATIVE No. 1, August, 2010. Published Monthly by MARVEL WORLDWIDE, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, LLC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016.
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$3.99 per copy in the U.S. (GST #R127032852); in the direct market: Canadian Agreement #40668537. **Printed in Canada.** ALAN FINE, EVP – Office Of The President, Marvel Worldwide, Inc. and EVP & CMO Marvel Characters B.V.; DAN BUCKLEY, Chief Executive Officer and Publisher - Print, Animation & Digital Media; JIM SOKOLOWSKI, Chief Operating Officer; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Talent Management; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP of Merchandising & Communications; JIM O'KEEFE, VP of Operations & Logistics; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Director of Publishing & Editorial Operations; SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; ALEX MORALES, Publishing Operations Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Ron Stern, VP of Business Development, at rstern@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-9158.

TWO YEARS AGO.
THE ANNIHILATION WAR.
LOOKS ALMOST... BEAUTIFUL...
...'TIL YOU REALIZE IT'S DIRTY RADIATION FLUSHING INCINERATED ORGANIC MATTER THROUGH THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE.
THERE'S A BEAUTY IN WAR LIKE THERE'S A BEAUTY IN NATURE, RICH.
LIFE AND DEATH, LOCKED TOGETHER. LIKE A FIGHT AND A DANCE.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH PETER QUILL?
RICHARD RIDER, NOVA
HUH?
THAT SOUNDED LIKE THE NEW AGE THINKING YOUR OLD SPACE HERO SELF USED TO PEDDLE.
YOU SAYING OLD PETE QUILL IS GETTING JADED? THAT I SHOULD GO BACK TO BEING THE HOPELESS ROMANTIC STAR-LORD?
HNH. MAYBE. BUT A LITTLE CYNICISM NEVER DID ANYONE ANY HARM.
RICH, YOU'RE JUST A KID. YOU'VE BEEN THROWN INTO THE DEEP END.
WE'VE BOTH SEEN WORLDS BURN. D'AST, ALL OF XANDAR DIED AROUND YOU AND LEFT YOU THE LAST SPACE COP STANDING.
THIS WAR'S GONNA TOUGHEN YOU UP. AIN'T NOBODY GONNA BE CALLING NOVA A LIGHTWEIGHT EARTH BOY BY THE END OF IT.
WELL, OBVIOUSLY, THERE'S THAT.
IF I LIVE THAT LONG.
PETER QUILL, STAR-LORD

THE TROUBLE WITH WAR OUT HERE IN THE STARS, IT GETS BIG, YOU KNOW?
YOU KNOW YOU'RE REALLY IN DEEP TROUBLE WHEN THE ABSTRACTS GET INVOLVED.
THE ABSTRACTS?
THE GREAT COSMIC EMBODIMENTS. THE UNIVERSAL CONSTANTS. ETERNITY, DEATH, OBLIVION.
YEAH, RIGHT.
OBLIVION'S GONNA COME UP TO ME IN PANTS AND A HAT. DEATH IS GOING TO RUN INTO ME ON THE STREET AND--
I HOPE YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, KID.
BUT IF YOU DO...IF DEATH COMES YOUR WAY AND WON'T LET YOU PASS...
...YOU MAKE SURE YOU SCREAM RIGHT BACK IN HIS FACE.

KNOWHERE.
HQ OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY.

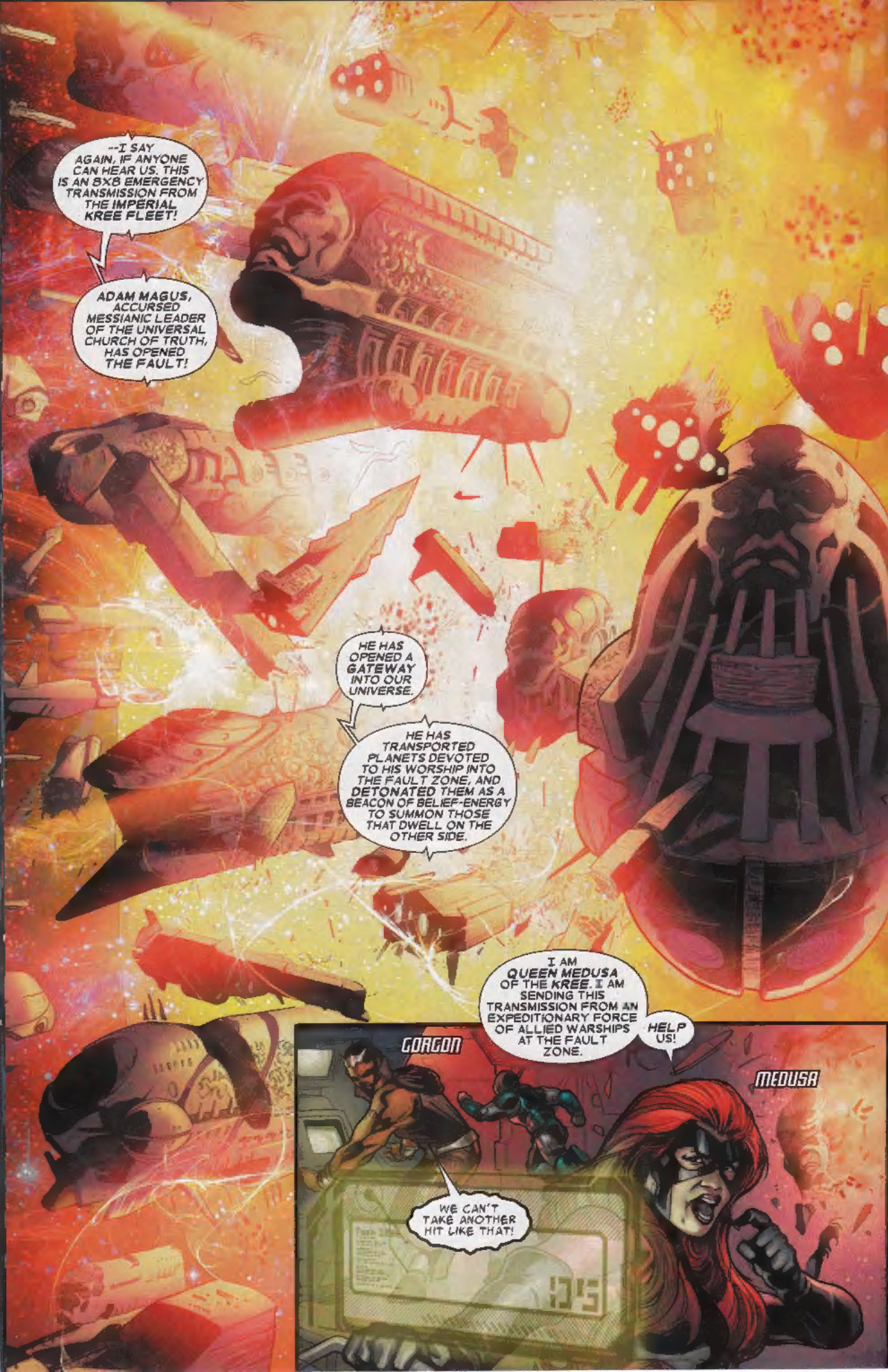
TODAY.

THREE MINUTES AFTER THANOS ESCAPED CAPTIVITY.

LIGHN!
RRRRAAAAIRRGHHHH!
NHHHKKKHHH!
LITTLE-- HELO-- GHHKK!
LET STAR-LORD GO, THANOS.
LET HIM GO NOW.
MMMMMRRRRHH?
RR-CHAKK

I SAID, DROP HIM.
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU MAY BE A LITTLE SLOW ON THE UPTAKE, BUT YOU UNDERSTAND WELL ENOUGH, DON'CHA?
THIS IS A RAMPART ARMS PHASIC CANNON. COLD FUSION, THE TWENTY MEGAWATT RANGE.
ROCKET RACCOON
POWERFUL ENOUGH TO MELT YOUR FACE OFF.
ROCK-ET!
NRHHH!
LISTEN TO ME, THANOS!
WE PROBED YOUR MIND WITH TELEPATHS. WE KNOW YOU'VE JUST HATCHED OUT OF THAT FREAKALICIOUS REGENERATIVE COCOON THAT BROUGHT YOU BACK TO LIFE.
I'M BETTING YOU'RE NOT BACK TO FULL STRENGTH YET TO TAKE A HIT OFF THIS BABY.
BUT THE REAL POINT IS, I'VE GOT IT SET TO QUARTER POWER...
...ENOUGH TO PARALYZE YOU LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO SEAL YOU IN A CRYOGENIC POD AND DROP YOU INTO A GRAVITY SINK.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
WE KNOW IT'S NOT DEATH YOU'RE AFRAID OF. IT'S LIFE. AND THAT'S WHAT I'M THREATENING YOU WITH.
ENDLESS LIFE.
LET. HIM. GO.

GAHH!
LADIES, A LITTLE BRAIN-TICKLE?
O!! COSMO IS ALL MAN, RACCOON.
PSIONIC MINDLOCK RESTORED.
THANOS IS CONTAINED AGAIN.
MANTIS
FOR NOW. IT WON'T LAST LONG.
MOONDRAGON
COSMO
WHAT SET HIM OFF? WE HAD HIM IN THE PSI-CLAMPS. SOMETHING MADE HIM GO NUTS AND SNAP.
DUNNO. MAYBE HE REALLY IS ALLERGIC TO LIFE?
HECK, MAYBE HE'S ALLERGIC TO EVERYTHING. COULD BE WHY HE WAS SENT BACK.
MAYBE DEATH GOT SICK OF HIM, TOO.
STAR-LORD? THIS IS GAMORA IN THE MONITOR ROOM... WE'RE PICKING UP EMERGENCY DATA TRANSMISSIONS FROM THE KREE AND SHI'AR EMPIRES.
JACK FLAG
GROOT
THE FAULT'S JUST GONE BUG-FLARK.
DEFINE YOUR TERMS, GAMORA.
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW THE FAULT IS A GIGANTIC TEAR IN TIME AND SPACE CAUSED BY THE RECENT WAR?
IT JUST WENT BUG-FLARK.
SWEAR TO GOD, GAMORA, DON'T MAKE ME COME UP THERE AND--
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW. IT SOUNDS BAD.
I'LL ROUTE THE TRANSMISSIONS DIRECTLY TO YOU...
8X8 EMERGENCY! 8X8 EMERGENCY! UNI-STREAM MESSAGE TO ALL CIVILIZED CULTURES--

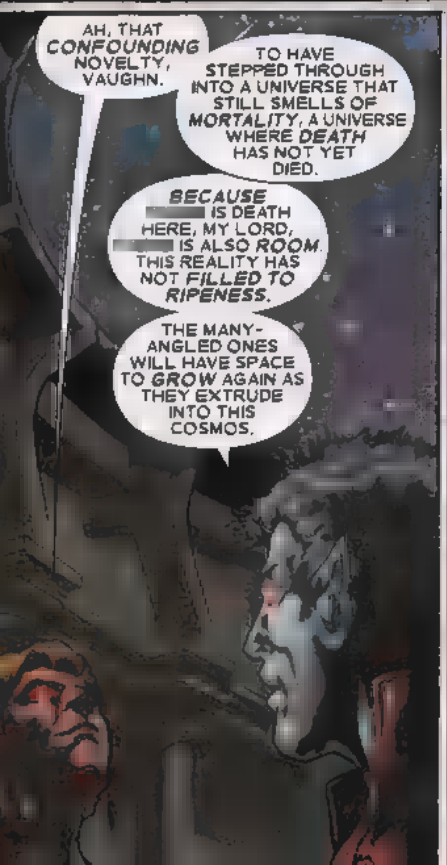

--I SAY AGAIN, IF ANYONE CAN HEAR US. THIS IS AN 8X8 EMERGENCY TRANSMISSION FROM THE IMPERIAL KREE FLEET!
ADAM MAGUS, ACCURSED MESSIANIC LEADER OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF TRUTH, HAS OPENED THE FAULT!
HE HAS OPENED A GATEWAY INTO OUR UNIVERSE.
HE HAS TRANSPORTED PLANETS DEVOTED TO HIS WORSHIP INTO THE FAULT ZONE, AND DETONATED THEM AS A BEACON OF BELIEF-ENERGY TO SUMMON THOSE THAT DWELL ON THE OTHER SIDE.
I AM QUEEN MEDUSA OF THE KREE. I AM SENDING THIS TRANSMISSION FROM AN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE OF ALLIED WARSHIPS AT THE FAULT ZONE.
HELP US!
GORGON
MEDUSA
WE CAN'T TAKE ANOTHER HIT LIKE THAT!

WHAT IN RANDAC'S NAME IS THAT?
RONAN
SUPER-PRESSURIZED MATTER. THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF AN ENTIRELY SEPARATE UNIVERSE VENTING INTO OURS.
IT'S AS THOUGH THE OTHER UNIVERSE WAS TOO FULL. OVERSTUFFED TO BURSTING POINT.
KARNAK
AND WHEN THE FAULT OPENED, IT SQUIRTED LIKE...
A LANCED BOIL.
CRYSTAL
MAXIMUS
CONTACT FROM THE SHI'AR FLAGSHIP!
MAJESTOR KALLARK! WHAT IS YOUR--
QUEEN MEDUSA--
--OUR SHIELDS ARE FAILING! THIS EJECTA, IT'S ALIVE!
THERE ARE THINGS COMING THROUGH OUR HULL!
GLADIATOR, MAJESTOR OF THE SHI'AR
AND, SHARRA HELP ME, THEY ARE ANNOYINGLY HARD TO KILL!
KTUHL SHM FTAGHN!

IMPERIAL GUARD! EVAC ORDER KYDRATH! ZERO-G DRILL! CLEAN [redacted] OFF THE HULL!
GET OUTSIDE, FIGHT SOME FREAKS! DAY IN, DAY OUT...
MOAN, MOAN, MOAN. THAT'S LIFE IN THE SHI'AR IMPERIAL GUARD! WE FIGHT THE FIGHTS THE MAJESTOR TELLS US TO!
WELL, THEY SHOULD'VE PUT HOW [redacted] IT WAS GONNA BE ON THE RECRUITING POSTER, [redacted] WHAT I'M SAYING!
KUSSAR
SMASHER
WHOA.
[redacted] JUST GAVE THIS THING A TASTE OF FULL LOAD STRENGTH TRAIT, AND IT'S STILL TICKING.
QUEEN MEDUSA, WE'RE GETTING MORE REPORTS THAT THE EXTRINSIC ENTITIES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY HARDER TO KILL OR DISABLE THAN WOULD FIRST APPEAR.
THEY [redacted] SIX OR SEVEN TIMES WHAT [redacted] WOULD CONSIDER LETHAL FORCE [redacted] PERISHING.
EXTRINSIC ENTITIES...
...IS THAT WHAT WE ARE GOING TO CALL THE CREATURES THAT WILL OBLITERATE US?

THEY'RE IN! THEY'RE IN!
REPEL THEM!
FOR HALA! FOR ATTILAN!
--CAN'T KILL THEM! CAN'T--
--REQUESTING IMMEDIATE FLEET SUPPORT TO COORDINATES--
--AAIIIIGGHHH--
--BRIDGE CREW ■ DEAD! THE DRIVES ARE BURNING--
--PLEASE, SOMEONE--
--SETTING THE SHIP TO AUTO-DESTRUCT IN THE HOPE THAT WE CAN TAKE SOME OF THEM WITH US AND--
--

THE CANCERVERSE'S QUASAR
THE JET [redacted] OF SHOGGOR HAVE [redacted] ARRANGED SO THAT YOU MAY OBSERVE THE INITIAL COMBAT, MY UNDYING LORD.
THERE IS COMBAT?
WE EXPECTED RESISTANCE. THE NATIVES OF THIS REALITY HAVE GATHERED A SIGNIFICANT ARMADA TO OPPOSE US.
[redacted] THEY BENEFITING FROM THIS STRATEGY?
THEY [redacted] DYING, LORD MAR-VELL.
LORD MAR-VELL
UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF [redacted] STARSHIP ETERNAL SIN


AH, THAT CONFOUNDING NOVELTY, VAUGHN.
TO HAVE STEPPED THROUGH INTO A UNIVERSE THAT STILL SMELLS OF MORTALITY, A UNIVERSE WHERE DEATH HAS NOT YET DIED.
BECAUSE [redacted] IS DEATH HERE, MY LORD, [redacted] IS ALSO ROOM. THIS REALITY HAS NOT FILLED TO RIPENESS.
THE MANY-ANGLED ONES WILL HAVE SPACE TO GROW AGAIN AS THEY EXTRUDE INTO THIS COSMOS.

I [redacted] THEM MURMURING WITHIN. PLEASURE, PERHAPS. OR A RATHER [redacted] AMBIGUOUS EMOTION.
LET US [redacted] CLEAR, THOUGH... WHILE DEATH MAY BRIEFLY AMUSE AND DISTRACT US WITH ITS UNFAMILIARITY, IT CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO PERSIST.
I UNDERSTAND, LORD MAR-VELL.

THAT FOOL, THAT ADAM MAGUS... [redacted] SHOULD HAVE PREPARED THE WAY, SO THAT CLEANSING THIS REALITY WAS [redacted] MERE FORMALITY.
THE SITE FOR THE NECROPSY HAS BEEN LOCATED AND VERIFIED, LORD.
THE HORRORSCOPE DOES NOT LIE TO [redacted] ADEPT LIKE [redacted].
MAGUS'S FAILURE WAS TO OBTAIN THIS REALITY'S AVATAR OF DEATH FOR THE RITUAL.
CAN YOU NOT [redacted] HER FLESHLESS HAND IN THIS, VAUGHN?
THE DEATH ABSTRACT OF THIS UNIVERSE IS TRYING TO DELAY HER OWN EXTINCTION BY CLOUDING THE MINDS OF THOSE STILL UNDER HER SWAY TO CONCEAL [redacted] CHAMPION.
THIS MATTER HAS THE UTMOST PRIORITY.
THE AVATAR WILL READ AS [redacted] ANOMALOUS [redacted]. IT WILL [redacted] CHARGED WITH ESOTERIC OR NON-LOCAL PROPERTIES AND E[redacted]. HUNT DOWN AND [redacted] ANY SUCH [redacted]. [redacted] WILL STRIP DEATH'S [redacted] AWAY.
YES, MY LORD.
YOU WILL [redacted] THE VERY BEST WE HAVE TO HELP YOU WITH THIS.
BUT OF COURSE, LORD MAR-VELL... [redacted] REVENGERS ARE ALREADY ASSEMBLED.

KNOWHERE.
NRRRRRAAHHHH!
GNNNKKKKAAHHHHH!
THANOS HAS BEGUN CONVULSING AGAIN. WHATEVER'S HAPPENING AT THE FAULT ■ VIOLATING HIS PSYCHIC FIELD.
MAJOR VICTORY
BUG
WE CANNOT GET INSIDE HIS HEAD.
COSMO DOES NOT WANT TO BE GETTINK INSIDE HIS HEAD ANYMORE.
YOU NOW WHAT? I DON'T CARE ABOUT THANOS!
I CARE ABOUT THE APOCALYPSE THAT JUST GOT UNLEASHED AT THE FAULT.
OUR UNIVERSE ■ BEING INVADED, STAR-LORD! WE SHOULD BE THERE, DEPLOYED ON THE FRONT LINES! AREN'T WE THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY?
CHEAP SHOT, MAJOR.
EVERYBODY, LET ME THINK FOR A ■.

WHATEVER'S HAPPENING AT THE FAULT, IT'S GOT TO ■ CONNECTED TO THE WARNING QUASAR BROUGHT BACK TO THE GALACTIC COUNCIL.
HE SAID THERE'S A RIVAL UNIVERSE ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE RIP. HE MADE IT SOUND PRETTY SCARY.
QUASAR'S REPORT STATED THAT LIFE HAD WON THERE. HE SAID THE UNIVERSE WAS DEATHLESS, THAT IT HAD FILLED ITS OWN DIMENSION TO THE BURSTING POINT.
HE CALLED IT A CANCERVERSE. THAT'S WHAT YOU CALLED IT TOO, MOONDRAGON, WHEN YOUR MIND TOUCHED IT.
IT'S LOOKING FOR NEW REAL ESTATE. THIS OUT ■ CONTROL...CANCERVERSE...IS TRYING TO METASTASIZE INTO OUR REALITY.
AND HOW DO YOU PROPOSE--
OH, PLEASE DON'T TELL ■ YOU'RE THINKING WHAT I CAN SEE YOU'RE THINKING.
YOU GIVE IT THE ONE THING IT HASN'T GOT...
ME.
FIRST THING THE GIANT FREAK'S SAID THAT I AGREE WITH.

NOVA CORPS STARSHIP RESOLUTE DUTY, AT THE MOUTH OF THE FAULT
ATTENTION ALL CREW! ALL PROBATIONERS! IT IS CRITICAL YOU PAY ATTENTION AT THIS TIME!
THE HULL IS NOW BREACHED IN FIVE POINTS! FALL BACK TO DECK SIX--
THIS IS IRANI, WORLDMIND! IT'S NO GOOD! DECK SIX IS COMPROMISED!
I FIND MYSELF PUT IN MIND OF AN INCIDENT ON THE SIXTH DECK OF--
NOT NOW, QUBIT!
WORLDMIND... THIS IS NAMORITA! I'M WITH ROBBIE RIDER ON DECK EIGHT, AND THERE ARE HOSTILES HERE, TOO!
PLEASE, WORLDMIND! HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONTACT FROM NOVA SINCE THE DETONATION?
LIKE I'D EVER LEAVE YOU TWO STRANDED.
WENDELL VAUGHN, A.K.A. QUASAR
RICH!

HEY, LITTLE BRO. IT'S ALL GETTING A LITTLE GROWN-UP AROUND HERE, HUH?
I'M FINE!
YOU FINE, NITA?
I AM NOW.
GOOD TO SEE YOU, RIDER. YOU TOO, QUASAR.
THIS IS A DESPERATE SITUATION, WORLDMIND.
I DON'T RECALL PROSPECTS EVER SEEMING QUITE SO BLEAK. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO STAND FIRM TOGETHER AND--
KTAL LLEAK! FTAGHN!
LUE AZES!
OH NO! I KNOW THESE THINGS!

RICH! THESE CREEPS HAVE GOT SERIOUS POWER-SETS! WE---
UGHHHFF!
YOU? THE WATERED-DOWN ECHO OF OUR VAUGHN...
WE MET ON OUR SIDE.
THIS PAIN I GIVE TO YOU.
WHAM
REVENGERS! THERE IS AN ANOMALY HERE!
THE YOT-SOTERIC VIBRATIONS DID NOT LIE!

GRAB THAT ONE... THE GIRL
NITA! NOO!
RICH!
FZZAMM
SHE'S GONE! THEY TOOK NAMORITA!
SHE'S GONE!

YOU HAVE CHARTED PATHWAYS INTO THIS RIVAL UNIVERSE *ALREADY?*
WE CONDUCTED SOME MISSIONS, SET UP NAVIGATIONAL BOOSTERS. BASIC RECON. *NOW* IT SEEMS LIKE PRUDENT PLANNING.
I SEE KNOWHERE'S CLOTHING FABRICATORS [redacted] UP WITH THE GOODS.
THIS GARMENT WILL SERVE.
KNOWHERE. THE CONTINUUM CORTEX.
THE ESCORT TEAM'S READY.
I WON'T *NEED* AN ESCORT, GAMORA.
I'M NOT MISSING *THIS* UNDERTAKING. IT SOUNDS LIKE A FUN TRIP.
"*UNDERTAKING*," GROAN. DO YOU [redacted] WHAT SHE-- *TIK!*--DID THERE?
I WILL RESTATE MY STRENUOUS OBJECTIONS TO EVEN *TALKING* TO THIS MONSTER.
AND I WILL RESTATE MY STRENUOUS OBJECTIONS TO YOUR VERY *EXISTENCE*, MOONDRA--
UNNNH!
NICE AND SLOW. WHAT IS IT?
THE INCREASING ENCROACHMENT INTO OUR DIMENSION OF THIS *LIFE-POLLUTION*.
I'M NOT WAITING [redacted] ANY LONGER.
WE'RE HEADING FOR THE FRONT LINE WITH THE LUMINALS. GOOD LUCK, I GUESS.
LUCK WILL HAVE *NO* BEARING ON THIS.

DRAX
GETTING DRESSED UP FOR THE OCCASION?
THAT PURPLE THING'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE WITHOUT A DESTROYER SHADOWING IT.
I...I WANTED TO THANK YOU.
I WISH YOUR EFFORTS TO KILL [redacted] HAD BEEN PERMANENT.
THERE'S ALWAYS A NEXT TIME.
ISN'T THAT THE UNFORTUNATE TRUTH?
ALL RIGHT, KIDS--ACTIVATE PASSPORT BRACELETS.
HOLY D'AST! LOOK AT THIS PLACE!
JUST THE FEEL OF IT--
FZZZM
UGGHH! MAKES COSMO WANT TO BARE TEETH AND BACK OUT OF ROOM!

DRAX, GAMORA...TAKE OUR FLANKS. LET'S EASE UP THE--
PETE!
I HAVE A PROBLEM.
THANOS IS--
I DON'T KNOW. THE PAIN OF JUST BEING HERE IN A UNIVERSE OF LIFE IS SO MUCH, HE...
...HE'S SHUT DOWN.
SO UN-SHUT HIM DOWN, MANTIS.
WE'VE GOT ANOTHER PROBLEM...

...AND IT'S A LITTLE MORE IMMEDIATE.
NEXT: DEFENDERS OF THE REALM!

CRACKING THE COSMIC CODE WITH DNA

DAN ABNETT AND ANDY LANNING HAVE SPENT THREE YEARS CRAFTING THE COSMIC SIDE OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE AND IT ALL COMES TO A HEAD HERE IN THE *THANOS IMPERATIVE*!

Marvel: *The Thanos Imperative* storyline is something you guys have been building toward in some capacity over the last couple of years. What's it been like laying the groundwork for this story and what's it like to finally get it out there?

Dan and Andy: It's a relief! We've been building towards this storyline since before we started writing *Guardians of the Galaxy*, over three years ago and it's undergone several drastic changes in that time. We'd like to thank the guys at Marvel who have given us the opportunity and space to tell the kind of epic space opera we grew up reading in the late seventies and eighties.

Marvel: When you guys took over the space-based reins of the Marvel U, Thanos had just recently died. You've mentioned in previous interviews that you didn't want to bring him back right away, but wanted to sow the seeds of his eventual return. Why did you decide on now? What made the timing perfect?

DnA: Obviously when we got the chance to play with the cosmic characters, Thanos has just recently been killed which meant he was off the table as far as using him in the overall story arc we were building. But, we always had plans to bring him back but wanted his return to be ■ major, pivotal cosmic event. This ■ Thanos after all, the Mad Titan, the guy who became ■ God and who unmade the universe with the Infinity Gauntlet; if we were going to do his return justice this story had to be BIG. It also had to feel organic; to grow naturally out of the story threads we were spinning out of *Annihilation*, then *Conquest* and finally *War of Kings*. All the various plot strands seemed to culminate and intersect in the events following *War of Kings*, which offered us a chance to spin out a greater meta-story, through the Inhumans and Imperial Guard mini-series ■■ well as in *Nova* and *Guardians of the Galaxy*, particularly in *Guardians*, where we had first laid the groundwork for what became the "Cthulhu-verse" — an alternate universe where "life" was the pervading state and what better antithesis to ■ realm of rampant life energies than the ultimate avatar of Death, Old purple puss himself!

Marvel: What's ■ like writing ■ character like Thanos? What's it like writing such a cosmically feared and dangerous character?

DnA: Like we said, when we were given the keys to the cosmic universe, we were able to work with some of our all-time favorite characters; we grew up reading, the likes of Warlock, Nova, Quasar, The Silver Surfer, the Imperial Guard, and the Inhumans. Thanos is such a mainstay to the cosmic canon of characters, he's the epitome of the cosmic bad guy and now that we finally get ■ chance to write him we're both excited like schoolboys and terrified beyond the realm of rational thought by the responsibility this entails. We just hope that we ■■■ do the character justice, introduce him to today's readers as well as show everyone what ■ great villain he is — one of the all-time greats.

Marvel: From what's been said about this event, it focuses on two sides: Nova, the Guardians and the other good guys versus Magus and the Dark Gods. How does Thanos fit into the equation? Is he the scale tipper in this event?
DnA: Thanos is the ultimate antithesis of the Dark Gods and Magus. They represent the "Cthulhu-verse" — ■ universe that's out of control. It's bursting at the seams, like a garden that's so overgrown at the height of summer it's verging on cancerous. Thanos embodies death and decay. He's the harbinger of entropy, not so much the scale tipper as the natural balance to ■ realm that's out of kilter and therefore a very important piece ■ the puzzle. Unfortunately for our heroes, he's also very much his own man and does not appreciate being dragged back to life, chained to an indestructible body and expected to carry out the objectives of a bunch of heroes that includes the guy who killed him.

Marvel: Although a lot of characters play into this story, it mostly focuses on Nova and Star-Lord. What about those two characters made them ideal as the eyes into the world? Is it the human aspect of the characters?
DnA: Absolutely, Peter and Rich have been the ideal POV for the readers during our previous "events." Their human perspective on the vast cosmic canvas helps us get ■ personal take on major universal crises and they become the reader's touchstone to events that otherwise can become so huge that they have little meaning on the human level. Rich and Peter give us ■ entry point that make these cosmic epics relatable and their reactions offer us a chance to explore and explain concepts and situations in a new light.

Marvel: How do the Inhumans and the Shi'ar factor into this story? With both their limited series ending, will their story be told in the main event title?
DnA: Both the Inhumans and the Imperial Guard, ■ representatives and leaders of their respective galactic empires, will be front and center ■ the story unfolds, though we will be focusing on a core group of heroes with specific missions and actions, which will include characters from both groups.

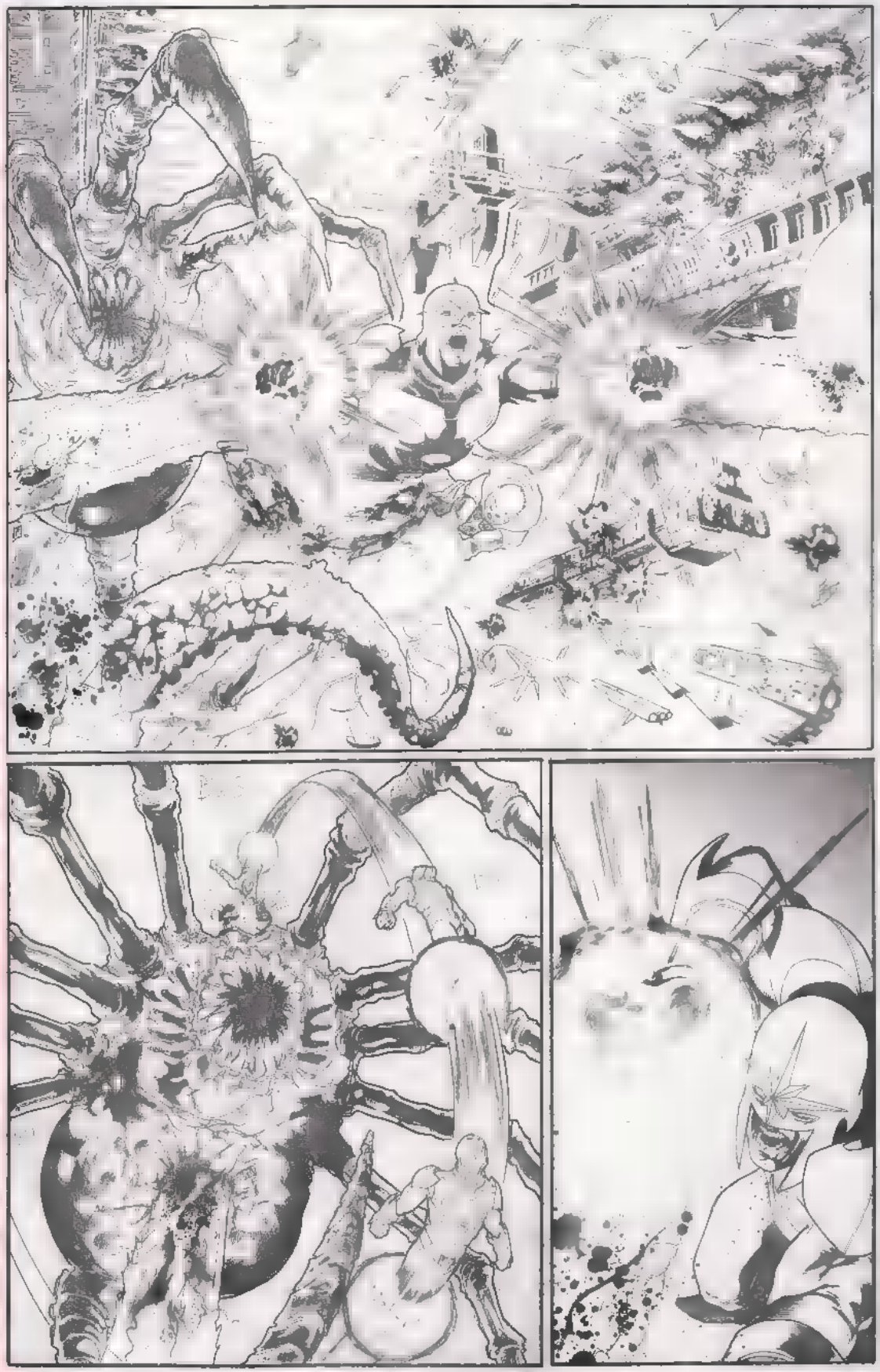
Marvel: What other characters will readers be seeing in this title? Anyone that you're really excited about bringing in and writing?
DnA: We don't want to spoil any surprises but you can lay money on ■ certain shiny cosmic dude and his omnivorous boss arriving to the party.

Marvel: I wanted to talk about the artists — Brad Walker and Miguel Sepulveda. What about these guys' style do you like? Readers have seen Brad's work on *Guardians of the Galaxy*, but what about Miguel made him ideal for the main limited series?
DnA: Brad's art has really evolved during his run on *Guardians*, he's gone from bloody good to really bloody awesome and his work on the *Ignition* prologue book is only going to add another superlative to that description. Miguel's art has ■ more moody and visceral feel to it, whereas Brad's clean, chiselled, classic approach has a Silver Age feel to it. Miguel is using techniques that give his art a gritty, contemporary feel. It's great to see him cutting loose with some mind-blowing sci-fi craziness after his realistic, real-world stint on *Thunderbolts*. We've been very fortunate during our run to work with some extremely talented artists. It's made much of our stuff look far better than it should and we're very grateful

Marvel: As a last question, this event looks at the concept of life versus death, with life actually being the bad thing. This is a pretty cool twist on what we'd expect. Why'd you guys decide to take this approach, with life without death being ■ dangerous and bad thing?
DnA: When we decided to run with the "Cthulhu-verse/ Cancerverse" idea, it seemed like ■ cool twist to play against expectations — normally everything decays and dies and entropy wins. The eternal struggle is to somehow stem this tide and reverse the natural order. The image of the garden at the height of summer kept coming to mind — how in its total fecundity it's just ■ creepy ■ a desolate wasteland. We thought of the life universe as something that is overgrown and over-ripe, bursting and oozing, choked and tangled and this led us to think of the Ancient Ones and Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos. Images of tentacles, pseudo-pods, multifaceted eyes and insane geometries sprang to mind and this seemed like an ideal fit, especially as we'd hinted at this in the very first issue of *Guardians*. Once we started to toy with this notion, it was clear that Thanos and the importance of his cosmic status ■ Avatar of death would be ■ key role in the story. It seemed in keeping with the reversed threat that Thanos would end up on the side of the heroes... sort of. And that was too cool an idea not to try to run with. Let's hope we do it justice and that readers enjoy the series. It's been over 3 years in the making and is the culmination of all our cosmic work so far! ■

THE THANOS IMPERATIVE #2 PREVIEW

Pencils by Miguel Sepulveda



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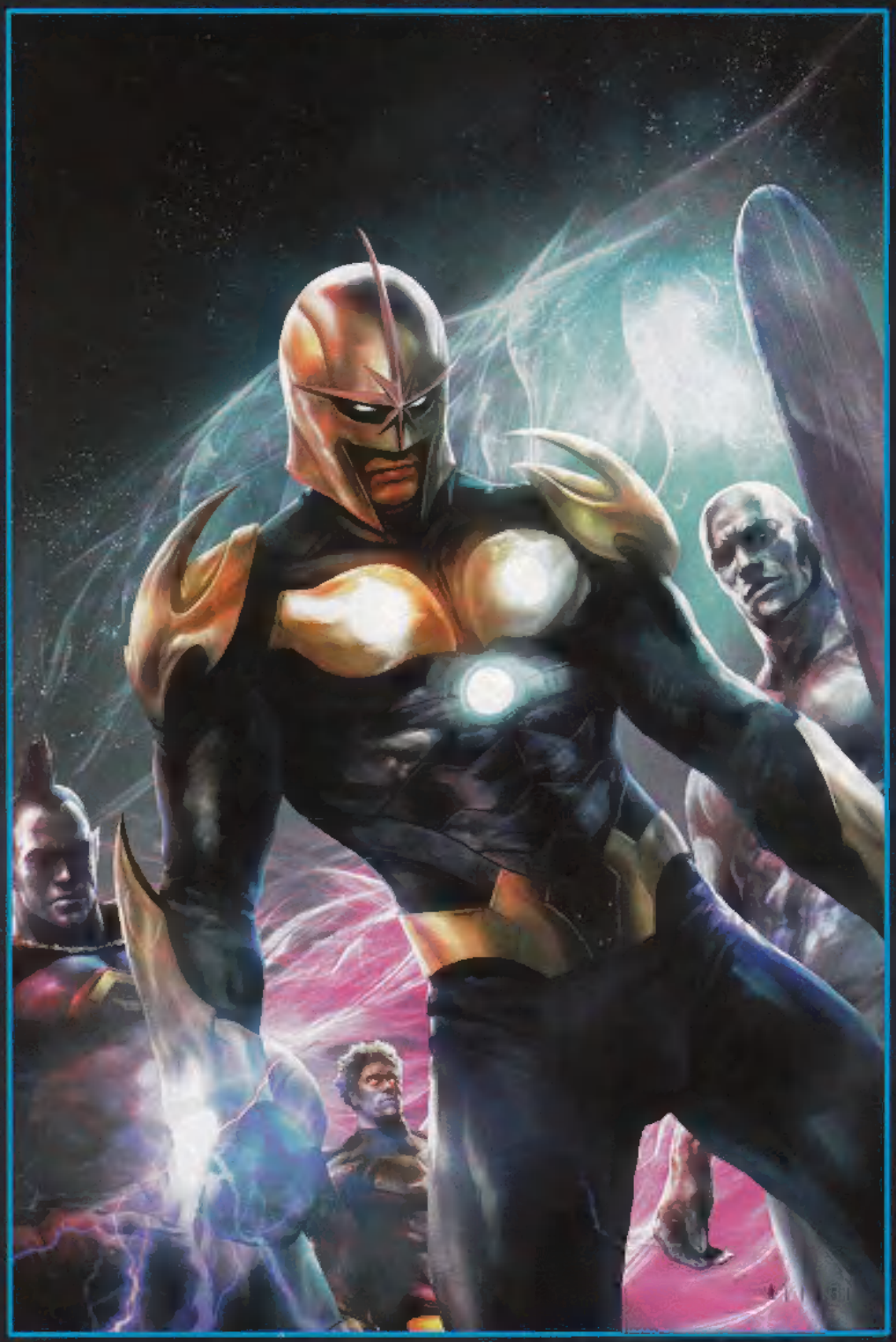

THE THANOS IMPERATIVE #2